General Grammar Booklet

for European Language Learners

Do you know a noun from a pronoun?
What sort of thing is a direct object?
Ever heard about agreements?
What is grammar, anyway?

Humanities
Programme

Imperial College
Introduction

As an introduction to this workshop I would like to ask you the following questions:

- Can you write and speak coherently?
- Are you aware of your language as you use it? (i.e. different registers, synonyms)
- Are you aware of the functions that words play in sentences? For example, if you say “My throat hurts”. Can you substitute the word “throat” by “finger”? (My finger hurts) and still make sense. But if you replace “throat” with “immediately” (“My immediately hurts”) will it still make sense?

As you have already noticed, you already know grammar in an intuitive way. This workshop will just introduce you to the way linguists, teachers, writers and journalists analyse the language and present it to students, readers and general public. In the course of the workshop, you will be taught some jargon and will be provided with reinforcement exercises for you to experiment with the way the English language works. This will enable you to transfer this knowledge to the foreign languages you learn. As you go along, you will be shown indicated in which communicative situations certain jargon is frequently used.

Learning grammar

A sentence can be analyzed in two different ways:

1. Studying individual word categories types and deciding how they behave in some contexts.
2. Studying the sentence structure and how different words fit into it.

This workshop will start by showing show you the very basics of word categories and structures that can be useful to a complete beginner.

WORD CATEGORIES

Words that make up sentences can be divided into 9 word categories according to their function:

- Four categories (noun, verb, adjective and adverb) have meaning. The other five (determiners, pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, interjections) are there to provide some information to the sentence (time, space, possession, etc).

- Some languages like German, Italian and Spanish display some grammatical features not existing in English. These special features will be examined separately by lecturers who will work with you in groups of students doing the same language.

Due to time constraints, this workshop will focus on the word categories that have meaning.
Nouns

What is a noun?
A noun is a naming word for:

- a person
- an animal
- a thing
- a place
- a feeling
- a quality

- a witch
- a rabbit
- a ball
- a forest
- fear
- greed

Nouns are labels we attach to everything in the world around us in order to help us differentiate one place from another (beach and school), one feeling from another (sadness and joy) and one thing from another (radio and television). How many nouns can you find in the sentences below?

**Exercise 1**
1. Switch your computer on.
2. Some bacteria escaped from the lab today.
3. Fish and chips make an excellent meal.
4. Qualities like patience and tolerance are good for friendship.

→ Sometimes nouns can be mistaken for similar words. For example, the word "shout" can act as a noun or another word category called "verb". In the following examples, can you tell whether "shout" is a noun or a verb?

**Exercise 2**
1. "Don't shout at me"
2. Give me a shout when you are ready"

If you are confused and want to find out if a word is a noun, apply these tricks:

**THINGS TO REMEMBER**
To discover if a word is a noun:
- Put a, an, the or some in front of it. Does it make sense?
- Can you put an adjective in front of it to tell you more about it?
- Can you turn it into a plural?

Example:
if we say We drove down the alley
the question "What is a drove?" cannot be answered with "It is a ...",
but asking "What is an alley?" would lead to reply "It is a little road".

Most nouns name things that can be seen, touched or perceived with the senses. They are called common nouns. Names used for non-material things are called abstract nouns. Names used to talk about people, specific places, companies, etc are called proper nouns.

**Proper nouns**
Nouns that describe the names of particular people, places, rivers, mountains, countries, days of the week, months, festivals and the titles of books and films are called proper nouns. They always begin with a capital letter.
All nouns have two features: gender and number.

1 Number: nouns are either singular or plural.

**SINGULAR AND PLURAL NOUNS**

**Individual nouns**
Nouns are either **singular** (only one) or **plural** (more than one).

- One man, one tree, one island
- Three cats under the stars
- A queue of people, a bunch of herbs

**Collective nouns**
Collective nouns describe a group of things.

Common nouns are divided into countable and uncountable. **Countable nouns** refer to names that can be counted by units:
- one CD → two CDs
- one lecturer → two lecturers
You can recognize them because they can be turned to plural and have numbers. **Uncountable nouns** are applied to things such as liquids, that need to be broken down or put in containers for us to be able to count them (a bottle of water, or a piece of furniture).

Many common nouns are arranged in bunches forming **collective nouns**. For example, we can talk about a sofa, a bed and a table individually, but when they form a group, we refer to them as "furniture". Many collective nouns are also uncountable. You can recognize them because they usually need "some" in front. Try and practice matching the correct uncountable noun with an individual one in the box below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual-countable</th>
<th>Collective-uncountable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>suitcase</td>
<td>literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kiss</td>
<td>water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>novel</td>
<td>affection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shirt</td>
<td>furniture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sofa</td>
<td>clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bottle of water</td>
<td>luggage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 **Gender:** a noun is either masculine, feminine or neuter in gender. The same way we talk about male and female animals or people, some languages also like to divide words into genders. English nouns do not have genders, with a few exceptions (i.e. occupations) as seen in the picture. Although genders only make sense for people, animals or plants (as things like objects, feelings and places don't have sex), in practice you should note that the meaning of some words in European languages change dramatically according to their gender.

If you are learning a foreign language, it would be wise to remember new nouns with their articles. For example:

- Spanish: *El libro* (the book, masculine) - *La libra* (the pound, feminine)
- Italian: *Il posto* (the place, masculine) - *La posta* (the mail, feminine)
PRONOUNS

What is a pronoun?
A pronoun stands in place of a noun or a noun phrase, such as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The cat scratched the velvet curtains.</th>
<th>The girl with the spotty hat clapped.</th>
<th>Jane is painting the door.</th>
<th>The children drank their hot chocolate.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It scratched them.</td>
<td>She clapped.</td>
<td>She is painting it.</td>
<td>They drank theirs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sometimes speakers refer to people or things not by its actual name, but by another shorter word that stand for the original name. This word is called pronoun and performs a very useful function: avoiding repetition. Think of the text in the box below. The person who wrote it made it sound uninteresting and repetitive. Could you replace “Britney Spears” by single shorter words?

"I really like Britney Spears. Britney makes great music and is very attractive. Of all the singers, I admire Britney the most. I have bought tickets for Britney’s new concert."

Exercise 5

Can you spot the pronouns in these sentences?

1. I don’t know his name. Is it Thomson?
2. She collected his parcel. Hers would arrive later.
3. "To whom does the printer belong?" he asked happily.
4. "The printer is mine", he colleague replied.
5. He has a car. It is brand new. We love it!

Exercise 6

There are many different types of pronouns. The most commonly used are the personal pronouns:

I, you, he, she, it, we, you, they

Language lecturers will use them very frequently, when introducing the verbs and will talk about “first, second and third persons”. If you wonder what that means have a look at the box below.

First, second and third person
Different types of text are written in a particular person.

- In the first person, the writer talks about himself or herself, using the pronouns I, we, my and our.
  eg I met my friend.
- In the second person, the writer talks to you. Sentences begin with a verb, with “you” left out.
  eg Fold the paper in half. Cut along the fold.

- In the third person, the writer tells what happened to other people, using the pronouns he, she, it, they, his, her and their.
  eg They found a ring. It was very shiny.
Determiners

Nouns quite often have other words attached to them that place them in context by giving information such as to whom do they belong, how many are there, whether they have appeared before in conversation and so on. They are called determiners (and also adjectives). Here are some examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determiners</th>
<th>+ noun “College”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definite articles</td>
<td>the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indeterminate</td>
<td>a-an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessive</td>
<td>my, your, his, her, our, your, their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrative</td>
<td>this - these, that - those</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite</td>
<td>any, some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeral</td>
<td>one, two, three...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrogative</td>
<td>what?, which?, how much?, how many?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which college?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Determiners are not used in the same way in most languages in the world. Some languages have hardly any determiners, others like French, Italian and German have a wide variety and use them very often in situations in which English would not.

Agreements
Determiners have their ability to match all aspects of the noun. If a noun is feminine and plural, its determiners will have to be feminine and plural. This is what your language tutors call agreement.

Example: Ma mère est allée a la bibliothèque (My mother went to the library)
Ma is feminine and singular like mère

Exercise 7 (in language groups)

Determiners and pronouns
Pronouns resemble determiners very much to the extent that they look similar and both agree with the name in terms of gender and number. Can you tell the difference in this example?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determiners</th>
<th>Pronouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is my pen</td>
<td>This is mine. (= my pen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>determiners always appear</td>
<td>Pronouns always stand alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in front of a noun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**ADD AN ADJECTIVE**

**What is an adjective?**

An adjective tells you more about a noun, such as:
- its size
- its shape
- its colour
- its feel
- its character
- its weight

- a small chick
- a rectangular tray
- a golden key
- a soft blanket
- a fierce crab
- a heavy hamper

→ More tips:

1. Adjectives have some common endings:
   - -ful: wonderful, careful
   - -ous: dangerous, jealous
   - -al: magical, classical
   - -ible: responsible
   - -ive: creative

2. Adjectives (like adverbs) can appear in comparisons and can end in -er and -est (tall, taller, tallest).

3. Adjectives answer the question: "What is it like?"
   Example: The angry policeman shouted at the cat. What did the policeman look like? Angry.

Adjectives add colour and spark to conversations and make stories more vivid. They are the stars of advertising. Can you spot the adjectives in the images below?

Exercise 8

Adjectives will appear in your language books when talking about nationalities, describing people, shopping for clothes and food and describing the weather. You can see below some common adjectives:

- **Colour:** red wine, blue screen, blue denim
- **Size:** big book, long journey
- **Nationality:** Spanish omelette, Chinese whispers
- **Flavour:** sweet chilli, aromatic crispy duck
- **Temperature:** hot soup
- **Weather:** windy day, cold dry night.
- **Shape:** square monitor
- **Character:** funny story, talkative personality, magic carpet
- **Age:** young boy, Victorian building
- **Material:** metal rod, plastic cover, velvet clothes
In this page you are going to meet some old friends, Asterix and Obelix. You can practice your adjective spotting once more by highlighting the adjectives in the boxes:

Exercise 9

"The year is 50 BC. Gaul (France) is entirely occupied by the Romans. Well not entirely … one small village of brave Gauls still resists the invaders. And life is not easy for the Roman legionaires who camp outside their lively village."

a few of the Gauls

Asterix, the hero of these adventures. A shrewd, cunning little warrior; all perilous missions are immediately entrusted to him. Asterix gets his superhuman strength from the magic potion brewed by the druid Getafix…

Obelix, Asterix’s inseparable friend. A menhir delivery-man by trade; addicted to wild boar. Obelix is always ready to drop everything and go off on a new adventure with Asterix—so long as there’s wild boar to eat, and plenty of fighting.

Getafix, the venerable village druid. Gathers mistletoe and brews magic potions. His specialty is the potion which gives the drinker superhuman strength. But Getafix also has other recipes up his sleeve…

Agreements

Adjectives, like determinants and pronouns, are closely related to nouns. Unlike English, adjectives have to match the gender and number aspects of the noun in most European languages.

Example: Je voudrais un kilo de pommes rouges.
I’d like to have a kilo of red apples.

The adjective rouges is feminine and plural because it qualifies the noun pommes (feminine and plural)
Verbs

🌟 BE THERE, DO THAT

What is a verb?
A verb is the word that tells you what is happening in a sentence.

He rows ashore. She likes this book. The jungle is dense. She feels excited.

Verbs are usually called “action words” because they usually describe someone or something in action, but they can also reveal a state (psychological, position, illness) or a feeling.

Peter runs a marathon
Peter is very tall
Linda has lots of friends
Peter is unwell
The competitors appeared attractive

(action, simple tense)
(state)
(state)
(feeling)
(f-state-feeling)

Can you spot the verbs below?

Exercise 10

1. Mum has crashed the car.
2. The chef is tossing a pancake.
3. Dad has made the tea.
4. The postman seemed unhappy that morning. He had to deliver a big parcel.

Verbs are the most important word in a sentence; without it a sentence does not make any sense. Look at sentences below; they have no meaning:

“He tea” and “She awkwardly”

Add verbs to give meaning to these words:

Exercise 11

1. The dog ............... at the cat. Looks, barks.
2. The girl ...............by the water. Waited, stood

Exercise 12

Try each of these verbs to make a sentence. See how the meaning of the sentence changes:

sees  
climbs  
finds  
gazes at  
reaches  
trudges up

The man dreams about the mountain.

A verb is usually made up of more than one word. For example:

He is talking
They have worked
We shall be running.
I was reading.
You will be late.
Would you like a cup of tea?

These are called auxiliary verbs. They help to talk about the future, past or present. They form the tenses.
**USING VERBS**

What is a verb tense?
A verb is the word that tells you what is happening in a sentence. The tense of the verb tells you when something happens.

- The **present** tense tells you that an event is happening now.
- The **past** tense tells you that an event has already happened.
- The **future** tense tells you that an event will happen in the future.

Practice filling in the missing auxiliary verbs and say what tense is used in each sentence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. We .......... going on holiday soon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. They .......... working for hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The baby .......... been crying all day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The dog .......... barking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. We .......... see you tomorrow.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Verb agreements**
As explained in the lines above, the verb is the dynamic centre of the sentence. It represents the action initiated by a person or thing called the subject.

Example: The builders are finishing the house.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJ</th>
<th>V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The thunder is setting the house on fire.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SUBJ | V

The verb has to agree with the subject (please refer to Personal pronouns). If the subject is plural the verb has to be plural and vice-versa. You can practice this by checking the following sentences and spotting any agreement mistakes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise 14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. These tomatoes is ripe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. James and Lucy is getting married today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Neither John nor his friend is coming to my party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Year 1 Spanish are very noisy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. There is some shoes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ann and Will have bought a flat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THINGS TO REMEMBER**

- The verb ending changes according to the subject.
  - I play.
  - He plays.
  - We play.
  - I am.
  - She is.
  - We are.
The verb and the sentence

The dynamic role of the verb extends to acts as connector between the subject and the rest of the sentence. It divides the sentence into subject and predicate:

Example:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Predicative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>has been running</td>
<td>a marathon in town for the past 3 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At this point, you will be switched to the second approach linguists use to analyze a sentence as described in the introduction. Let’s have a look at what is a sentence and how is it constructed.

A sentence makes sense.

The simplest sentence has an actor (a subject) and an action (a verb):

- The boy sits.
- The hungry lion.

The hungry lion roared. This is a complete sentence.

The smallest sentence has a verb and a subject. Nouns and pronouns usually perform the role of subjects:

- Jewels sparkle.
- Jen waves.
- The cat purred.

For most sentences to make sense, the verb has to have an object, that is, something or someone that is affected by the verb. The object tells you “what” or “whom” the verb affects. Verbs and objects are usually quite close to each other.

Examples:  

1. Granny burnt the cakes
2. Peter eats roast beef

Granny burnt what?

Peter eats what?

The object tends to appear after the verb:

For instance:

Exercise 15

1. Cats chose mice.
2. Albert burnt the cakes.
3. Alice liked Ben.
4. She is playing the piano.

In your European languages classes, most lecturers will talk about two different kinds of objects: direct and indirect. The direct object is the first one to be affected by the verb. When there are more than one object, the second least affected one is called indirect object. In general terms, when there are two objects in the sentence, beginner students of grammar can consider that the objects preceded by prepositions such as “for” or “to” is the indirect object. But this is just an indication, in practice it is more complex than this.

Example: James brought the cakes and James bought the cakes for me

D.O. D.O. I.O.
Make some sentences by taking each **subject** in turn and choosing a **verb** and an **object** that makes sense.

**Exercise 16**

For example: She sees the jewellery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>plays</td>
<td>fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You</td>
<td>make</td>
<td>cake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He</td>
<td>mends</td>
<td>jumper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She</td>
<td>see</td>
<td>jewellery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We</td>
<td>cut</td>
<td>recorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They</td>
<td>finds</td>
<td>fish tank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friend</td>
<td>eats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His mum</td>
<td>cleans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now you know that some verbs need an object to make sense and some others don’t. The verbs needing an object are called **transitive verbs**. The verbs that need no object are **intransitive verbs**. Try to form sentences by matching the actors to the actions of the following sentences.

Say which verbs are transitive and intransitive.

**Exercise 17**

For example: The menacing alien fell into the garden pond.

**Actors**
- The happy king
- The busy robot
- Merlin, the magician
- The forgetful elephant
- The brave princess
- The genie of the lamp

**Actions**
- ... lost the magic key.
- ... scared away the monsters.
- ... was frightened by the loud thunder.
- ... yelled loudly.
- ... tripped over the fallen tree trunk.
- ... fought the fiery dragon.
- ... danced all night.
- ... gave me a present.
- ... smiled happily.
- ... looked back.
- ... disappeared.

When in doubt... remember!

**THINGS TO REMEMBER**
- To discover whether a word is a verb, see whether you can change its tense.
- Some verbs in the past tense end in -ed, such as looked, lived, explained.
- Check that the verb ending agrees with the subject.
Adverbs

What is an adverb?
An adverb gives extra meaning to a verb or a sentence. An adverb can tell the reader:

How?
He swims strongly.

Where?
He swims away.

When?
He swims today.

★ Many adverbs are made by adding -ly to an adjective, eg badly, slowly, softly, strangely.

★ The adverbs very, quite, really, more, most and as much as can say more about an adjective.

I’m quite tired.

I’m very happy.

I’m really angry.

They are quite useful because they tell you about where, how and when something is happening.

For example: “Ben returned” is a sentence that makes complete sense. But Ben returned home quickly yesterday is much more precise.

Exercise 18
Hunt for adverbs
Find the adjectives in this passage and say which kind of information do they tell about the text:

“Look at that octopus!” shouted the captain fearfully.
“It’s MASSIVE!” exclaimed the bosun.
Jenny asked anxiously, “Could it climb aboard?”
“I doubt it,” said One-eyed Jim, reassuringly.
“It’s coming closer,” shrieked Aunt Alice.
“It looks very angry,” Pirate Pete said grimly.

Exercise 19
Change the adverbs
Make this text more exciting by replacing quietly with some of the adverbs in the box:

softly silently inaudibly
attentively carefully
alertly calmly closely
vigilantly furtively
cautiously slyly slowly

Quietly, the explorers landed on a grassy bank. Jane peered quietly at some footprints, while Leo quietly watched a monkey. Neither of them noticed the jaguar stalking quietly along a branch, nor the alligator quietly swimming towards them.
Types of adverbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manner</td>
<td>How do you drive? Slowly, quickly, fast, happily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>When did you arrive? Yesterday, today, late, early.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Where is the library? far away, close.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity</td>
<td>Very quickly, rather slowly, too hot, fairly sunny,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>highly intelligent, don't entirely agree, just right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>How far? We walked all the way home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>How long is the strike lasting? Indefinitely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>How often do trains depart from this station? Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How often will I be paid? Monthly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What a difference!
An adverb can change the meaning of a sentence. Try finishing the sentence below with each different adverb. See how each adverb alters the meaning.

The robot waited...

calmly, loudly, impatiently, quietly, confidently, miserably, cheerfully.

Exercise 20

How do they do it?
Pick one of the characters below. Then choose one of the actions (verbs) from the purple box, and one of the adverbs from the blue box. Finally, write down your sentence.

eg Granny dances badly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The mouse</th>
<th>The sailor</th>
<th>The frog</th>
<th>The skeleton</th>
<th>The girl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

verbs | adverbs
---|---
dances | slowly
splashes | loudly
| eats | badly
| jumps | grumpily
| calls | fast
| smiles | naughtily
| plays | lazily
| behaves | happily
| creeps | wearily
| sings | well

Adverbs and adjectives

Adverbs can be mistaken by other word categories such as adjectives and prepositions. In order to find out if a word is an adverb, you can make use of the following tips:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. It qualifies a noun: He is a hard player. I took an early train.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. In some European languages it agrees with the noun: El niño está contento. Los niños están contentos.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. It answers the question “What is it like?” “The policeman shouted angrily at the wild cat”</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. May have some special endings: • noun + ous: danger/dangerous • noun + ible/able: favour/favourable • noun + al: magic/magical • noun + ful/less: care/careful -less • verb + ive: create/creative, etc.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. It qualifies a verb, adj, or another adv: He plays hard. The train arrived early</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. It does not agree with any word (invar.). El tren está cerca. Los trenes están cerca.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. It answers the questions: “how? where? when?” “Ben returned home quickly yesterday”</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. May have some special endings: • adjective + ly: sure/surely, exceptional/exceptionally though many look like adjectives as seen above.</td>
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Conjunctions

☆ JOINING AND CONNECTING WORDS

What are conjunctions?
Conjunctions are words which join two short sentences to make a longer one.

I like cats but I prefer dogs.
Dad gave us a puppy and he bought a lead and a collar too.
We play with the puppy at home or we take it out for walks.

Conjunctions also link words together and help to make famous pairs such as “fish and chips”, “young yet intelligent”, “your money or your life”. Here are some commonly used conjunctions:

Useful conjunctions
and but when because
if while since although
so until when though

Many conjunctions come in pairs such as: both...and, nor...neither.

Can you fill in the missing conjunctions in the sentences below?

Exercise 21

1. Henry got up late ............... he was on holiday.
2. He wanted to have a bath ............... the water was cold.
3. She smiled ............... I greeted her.
4. I haven’t spoken to my sister ............... I saw her last summer.
5. Celia could not decide ............... it was true ............... not.
6. The child is ............... laughing ............... crying.

Rewrite these sentences. Leave some as they are and join others with conjunctions to make them read better.

Exercise 22

It was a crisp, snowy day. The sun was shining. We decided to go for a walk. We walked across the fields. The sky darkened. An icy wind started blowing. It began to snow again. The snowflakes fell thickly. We couldn’t see where we were going. We couldn’t find our way home.
Prepositions

Prepositions are words that often tell you where is one thing, what position is it in or when is it happening. Common prepositions are:

in on under to
after before near
around beside
about up beyond
on top of between

Exercise 23

Try and underline the prepositions in the following notices:

The nearest toilet is situated behind the town hall
DO NOT PARK ON DOUBLE YELLOW LINES
Please leave trolleys in the bay provided
The front door will be locked after 11 o’clock
DOGS MUST BE KEPT ON A LEASH
KEEP OFF THE GRASS
Do not cross over the bridge

Exercise 24

Can you think of suitable prepositions to fill the gaps below?

Charlie got . . . . early. He put . . . . his clothes and went . . . . the stairs . . . . the kitchen. He sat . . . . the table . . . . the window and looked . . . . the garden and saw his father sitting . . . . a tree. When he had finished eating he went . . . . the door, . . . . of the house and . . . . the garden to join his father. He sat . . . . him on the ground and looked seriously . . . . his eyes.
“Can you lend me some money, Dad?” he asked.

As you can see from the example above, prepositions tend to be followed by two or three words. However, when a preposition follows a verb and is part of its meaning it is considered like a part of the verb, a phrasal verb.

Example: “He chased the thieves up the road” (preposition)
“He chased the order up” (phrasal verb).
In languages like German, Russian or modern Greek, nouns and accompanying words (adjectives and determiners) change their form (especially their endings) according to their grammatical function. They show different forms (called **cases**) according to whether they are functioning as subject (nominative case), direct object (accusative case), indirect object (dative case) or possessor (genitive case). Languages with cases are called **inflected languages**.

This feature, that existed in many old languages such as Latin, has been lost in English and most Western European languages and therefore the study of inflected languages seem a daunting task for most students. However, some cases still exist in English pronouns and structures used to show possession. Perhaps you have already noticed that the pronoun **who** changes to **whom** and **whose** according to its function in the sentence.

To facilitate the understanding of cases to students of Central and Eastern European languages, the exercise below has been included in this workshop. Try to fill in the gaps with the pronouns **who, whom, whose** and explain their functions in each sentence.

1. .................. ordered the pizza?
2. To ................ it may concern.
3. I asked the neighbours ................ letters were these.
4. ................ do I have to ask the keys for?
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